EDITORIAL

Sustainable Development and Inclusive Quality Education

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This issue of *JL4D* has a particular focus on the sustainable development of inclusive quality education for all. We are also very pleased to launch a new series in *JL4D* in which members of COL's Board of Governors and others discuss the role of learning for development in their own context.

In our first commentary, Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić and Sir John Daniel discuss the past, present and potential future of UNESCO's contribution towards Education for All (EFA). The authors trace the failure to achieve targets in the 1990s, tensions between major international agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank, faster progress in the 2000s, and the stronger push from 2010 to align the full agenda of EFA within the Sustainable Development Goals 2015 (SDGs) before their finalisation. Goal 4 of the SDGs aims to achieve inclusive and quality education for all as "one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development".[1]

The SDGs and World Bank initiatives provide the context to our second commentary by Murgatroyd and Sahlberg on two "solitudes" of educational policy. These are illustrated by the tensions between competing and conflicting views on the purpose and practice of primary and secondary education. The authors compare the Global Educational Reform Movement (GERM), with its emphasis on neoliberal market principles to deliver key competencies and skills, against policies based on Equity, which aim to develop the citizen as a lifelong learner. In both cases, the implications for developing countries are discussed and four recommendations for ways forward are proposed.

Our first invited article launches our new series. We are delighted that Dr Emma Kruse Vàai from the National University of Samoa, representing the Pacific on COL's Board of Governors, has provided our first contribution. Dr Kruse Vàai explores the introduction of open and distance learning and the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) in Samoa through the development of a course on English for Primary Teachers. This experience illustrates a number of important points, such as the challenges related to connectivity, the value of OER for reducing costs, and the possibilities of collaborative development of course content to avoid concerns about external dominance. However, long term planning and policies are needed to ensure sustainable development goals.

Quality is recognised as a work in progress in Samoa and is also of key importance within the SDGs. Our second invited article provides a valuable perspective on how Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) challenge traditional models and measures of quality in higher education. Hood and Littlejohn define the dimensions of a MOOC (all of which are debatable) and indicate ways in which their practice is disruptive to three general quality variables and measures in relation to presage, process and product. In the latter case, for example, completion rates, usually a key performance indicator for quality, are not relevant. The authors argue that MOOCs provide a shift from traditional quality indicators to learner self-reports.

Policies supporting equity have a strong focus on inclusion, accessibility and the support needs of learners. This provides the background to our research paper reviewing the Indira Gandhi National Open University's (IGNOU) progress towards inclusive education in India. Chaudhury, Khare, Gupta & Garg provide a detailed analysis of data relating to the participation of marginalised communities in IGNOU's programmes, and some evidence of retention and completion rates. Among those considered are lower castes, women, differently-abled people and prisoners (jail inmates). While there are policies and strategies in place to encourage the enrolment of underrepresented groups, these have had not yet been entirely successful. However, there are some major positive changes, for example the greater participation of rural women in higher education.

Our two book reviews complement the discussion of the importance of inclusive and quality education through emphasizing the need for an informed research agenda for online and distance education (Eds. Zawacki-Richter & Anderson), and the possibilities created by flexible pedagogy and practice (Eds. Burge, Gibson & Gilson). Access to inclusive quality education for all remains a key target for development and we hope that the articles included in this issue will support your thinking towards meeting the SDGs by 2030.

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Chief Editor, *JL4D*

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[1] http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-4-quality-education.html